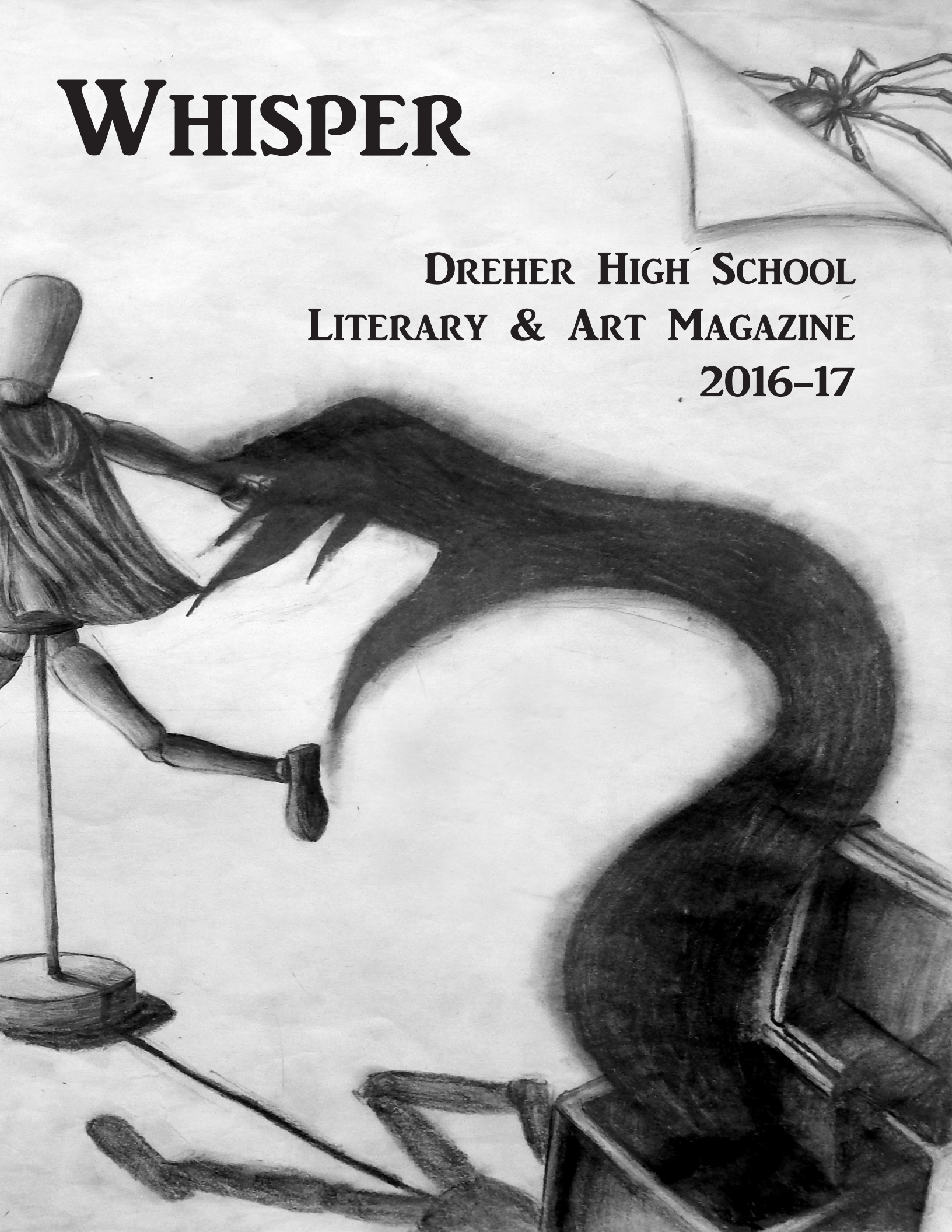
Whisper

Dreher High School
Literary & Art Magazine
2016–17





"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

–Mother Teresa

Cover Art by Odalys Trejo

Whisper...

Literary & Arts Magazine
2016-2017

Behind The name...

We are living in a very tumultuous and unsettling time, with unrest everywhere we turn. While it may seem hopeless at times, it is we, the people, who can create a movement of change.

Everyone has the voice and ability to make a positive influence on the world. Change comes forth when positive choices are made, started by our expressions and actions, regardless of how small they may seem. Each of our voices can have an influence, one **whisper** at a time…

Peace...

We are whispering sounds of peace. We must find peace within ourselves in order to have a positive influence on the world. Once we have accepted ourselves, for all of our strengths and weaknesses, we can be free to accept others. It is through the acceptance of others that will be find a decrease in societal woes, and an increase in our ability to enjoy and accept the Earth as it is.

Staff

Emma Bliese
Taylor Coones
Hateria Goodwin
Sarah Hinnant
Christell Holmes
Erin McFarland
Jordan Williams
Sarah Swan Kloos
Jen Gorlewski, Sponsor & Producer

Policy

The Dreher High School Literary and Arts Magazine is a collection of literature and art submissions. The magazine editing team reserves the right to edit manuscripts for clarity, grammar, spelling and mechanics. All works submitted are original works reviewed and selected by the magazine editing team.

Dreher High School
3319 Millwood Ave.
Columbia, SC
29205
(803) 253-7000

Photograph by Mary Huth

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Inner Peace is...

Being Present

Stressfree

Calmness!

happiness inside you.

Peace with yourself

Control

Happiness

Accepting Yourself

A Journey

Serenity

True Happiness

A state of calmness

the happiness inside of you.

Life GOALS

The Acceptance of YourSelf

Stressfree

Knowing your worth

spiritual

Artwork by Emma Bliese

Serenity
by Camryn Dildine

Peace
I am finally at peace with myself
For so long
Hatred and rancor
Was all I ever knew
And one day that storm blew over
And out shone the sun
The war in my head
Ended in defeat
I am finally at peace with myself
Peace

In the End
by Grace Hinnant

Look in the mirror pretty girl
What do you want in this world?
There is so much more to you than what meets the eye
All the makeup does not define your beauty
The size of your jeans does not describe your weight
You’re so beautiful in more ways than you know
Take off all the shame you carry around
Because in the end all of it fades away
The tan goes away
The makeup wears off
In the end it is just you
You do not have to prove how special you are
In the end all you have to know is that you love
Your beautiful soul

Woman in the Mirror

by Mikeala Rainey

I sit in cafeteria, alone as usual, staring at my lunch that I so desperately want to eat. I know there's a bunch of perfect people looking at me waiting for me to scarf it down. I can see it now. *'Extra, extra read all about it: Fat girl eats her lunch in 18 seconds like a fat pig.'* It would make a perfect story in the skinny people newspaper. I finally pick up my fork and stab at one of the sliced pears on my plate. As soon as it hits my mouth, I hear snickers and giggles around me. I feel the tears burn and threaten to fall out of my eyes. I push my food away, not wanting to give them a show anymore.

I'm Harper Mitchell, 16 going on 17 in June, 5 feet 9 inches and 211 pounds. I'm a whole lot of girl. Fat people run in my family, except for my little sister, Amber, weighing in at the perfect 123 pounds. *God knows what I'd give to be 123 pounds.*

I pick up my tray and stand up to walk it to the trash. As I walk, I feel my stomach jiggle, my thighs wiggle and the eyes of my peers on the dancing limbs. I make my way back to my table to grab my book bag so I can hide in the bathroom for the rest of lunch. I look at my table and I see a boy. Not just any boy, but Landen Davis, the captain of the basketball team and the star quarterback for the Wolverhampton High School football team. Did I mention, he is the most beautiful boy in the entire world? *Why is he sitting at my table?* I go to the table and grab my book bag and try to make a run for it.

"Um excuse me?" he asks. I turn around to see if he is talking to me.

"Your name's Harper, right?" he asks, flashing me with that beautiful, white smile.

I don't trust my voice, so I nod my head like an idiot, which makes him laugh.

"My name is Landen Davis." *Oh, I know who you are.*

"We have science and math together," I point out.

He nods and looks down with his jet black hair covering his face.

"So anyway…this is embarrassing, but I've always thought you were very beautiful and I'd like to take you out sometime," he says nervously.

My eyes widen and my heart stops. Y*OU want to ask ME out? I'm sorry but do you not see the giant hippo that is me and the beautiful angel that is you?* I look around in shock, glancing at the "perfect, cool" people's table where Landen usually sits. They were looking in our direction and laughing their perfect little faces off. *Of course he doesn't like me or find me attractive. No one does.*

"Look, I don't care what bet or dare you and your friends are having. Just leave me out of it," I say to him.

He looks confused. "Um, what are you talking about?" *Wow, football player AND an actor.* I roll my eyes and walk out the lunch room, hearing more people laughing at my jiggling body.

The next few weeks consist of people laughing at me, not eating at lunch, getting good grades, and Landen asking me out over and over again. *He must have a lot riding on this bet because he won't let up.* The thought of Landen and I together is stupid, laughable even. Sometimes I think he just might like me, but then I take a look down and see my gut staring back at me saying *"honey if he wants you, he'll have to get me. And we both know he don't want this."*

One day, Landen comes up to me and says "Harper please give me a chance. I really like you and I wanna take you out." Usually I say no nicely but today was different. I am sick of getting laughed at as if I'm his personal clown.

"God, leave me alone. I know you don't like me okay? I know this is some kind of joke or bet or dare, and I'm not going to fall for it. I'm 211 pounds! That's almost the same size as you. What could you possibly want with that?!?!?" I yell loud enough for half the cafeteria to hear me.

"You think I'm asking you out as a dare? Harper I am asking you out because I like you and you are beautiful. I don't care if you're 50, 100 or 200 pounds. You just won't let yourself accept the fact that someone likes you because you don't love yourself. You've got to look at the beautiful woman in the mirror and tell her that she is indeed beautiful. And once you finally love yourself you can give me the honor of making you fall for me." He says in an equally loud voice.

His words hit me like a wave and I feel everyone looking at me as he walks away from me. Tears flow down my face and I run out of the lunch room and school completely.

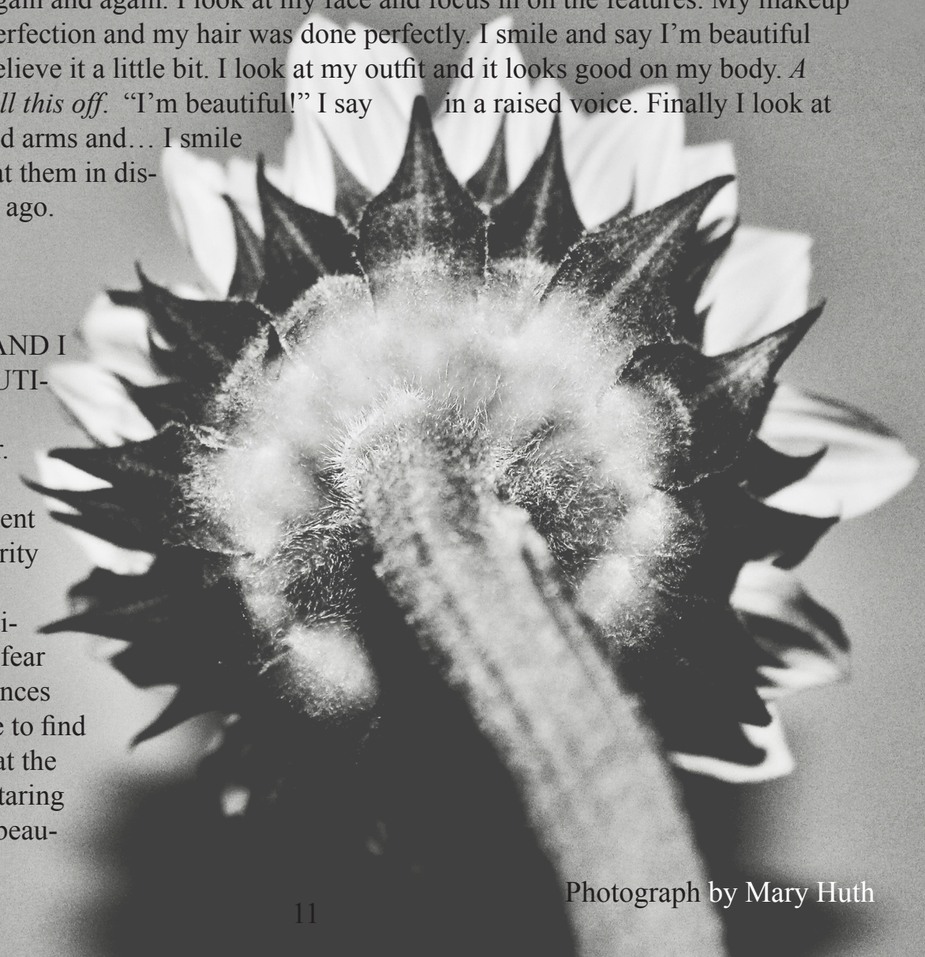
I walk home, knowing my mom's at work so the house will be empty. I make my way upstairs and lock the door. Landen's words play in my head over and over again. I look across my room and see my full length body mirror on the ground because it never gets used. I stand up and pick it up off the ground and prop it up against the wall. I stand back and look at it and see my reflection. Tears creep up to my eyes when I see my stomach and giant thighs. I breathe and whisper "I'm beautiful." Of course I don't believe it. So I say again but only this time louder. "I'm beautiful." I say again and again and again. I look at my face and focus in on the features. My makeup looked near close to perfection and my hair was done perfectly. I smile and say I'm beautiful again but this time I believe it a little bit. I look at my outfit and it looks good on my body. *A skinny girl couldn't pull this off.* "I'm beautiful!" I say in a raised voice. Finally I look at my stomach, thighs and arms and… I smile with joy. I don't look at them in disgust like I did minutes ago.

"I'm beautiful!"

"I'm beautiful!"

"I'M BEAUTIFUL!"

"I AM BEAUTIFUL AND I LOVE MY FAT BEAUTIFUL SELF!" I scream and beam at the mirror. Tears flow down my face. Tears that represent all the pain and insecurity I have had since I was 12 fall down my beautiful, fat face. My only fear is that I ruined my chances with Landen. I'll have to find out tomorrow. I look at the woman in the mirror staring back at me and she is beautiful. All of her.



Photograph by Mary Huth

Artwork by Sarah Parker

Like No Other

by Chase Bradley

I am myself
Like no other
My mind is like a shelf
Full of clutter
Confused about myself
I'm lost
My identity is lost at sea

Swimming trying to find it
The thoughts floating among the waves

Ugly
Stupid
Dumb
Jock
But I find it
The identity
Buried under all the clutter
It reads
I am myself
Like no other

When Did You Cease to Love?

by Taylor Coones

When did you cease to love, then hate yourself?
What terrible event?
How long ago?
Was there a slight misunderstanding view of it all
That led to fading love, then bitter hate?
What was the silent judgment of yourself that you made
Without a witness, umpire, counsel, or friend?
Where was that childhood friend you loved called "God"
Who knew you better than you knew yourself
And understood your every thought and action?
What black and riotous weeds grow secretly
Covering up the thoughts you thought were good?
What demon whispered sweet and viciously?
Alas, the answer!
The only way to love is
To love that self that never went away



Artwork by Florence Wang

What I Never Knew

by Grace Hinnant

I never thought there would be a time where I would not wake up choking on my tears.
A time where I would not look away when I saw what I was in the mirror.
I never thought there would be a time where I would stop drawing on my arms.
A time where I could walk in a room and not feel invisible.
I never thought there would be a time where I could smile like nothing hurt in the world.
A time where I just let go of the past and lived in the moment.
I never thought there would be a time where I was not screaming to the point no noise would come out.
A time where I believed that I was strong.
I never thought there would be a time where I would not suffocate by the pain I endured.
A time where I was not captivated by the ugly words that filled my mind.
I never thought there would be a time where I would not put myself in a deep sleep.
A time where I was so happy with joy it would annoy other people.
I never thought there would be a time where I loved myself.
A time where I was okay with everything I am.
I never thought there would be a day I cared about living.
Today is the day I begin a life worth living.
Today is the day I start loving what I see in the mirror.
Today is the day I do not just draw a smile on my face.
Today is the day I stop being sad all the time.

An American's Guide to Inner Peace through Meditation

by Maherah Shaik

Make certain that each of the following things are completed before you begin the sacred process:

- Take a dip in the holy water of the Tennessee River exactly 13 days before beginning sanctified process.
- Water collected from the Niagara Falls in a copper flask must be sprayed in all corners of the house for 5 days.
  Note: Water can be found at superstition.com for the easy price of $250.
- Stay on a diet of soda drinks only (recommended Cherry Coke) since the night before.
- In order to keep the meditation room dark, surround all windows with Mahogany wood.
- A red carpet made of pure velvet should be used as flooring during the process.
  Note: Carpet can be found at falsebeliefforfools.org for the easy price of $749.
- Make sure there is no trace of red in the room.
- All things made of wood should be removed from the room.
- Place a Mammilarian Cactus at 175 degrees west of the room.
- The room temperature during the process must be set exactly at -13 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Every single electronic appliance (including kitchen appliances) are turned off.
- You should have gotten exactly 6 ½ hours of sleep before starting.
- Make sure you're completely hydrated (tap water only).
- Wear a black sleeveless t-shirt and white shorts during the process.
  Note: Black for warding off the evil and white to absorb the evil that the black failed to avert.
- Conduct the process between the hours of 16:00 and 20:00.
- Listen to whale noises for 30 minutes while seated facing 25 degrees north and 68 degrees east.

Supplies you will DEFINITELY NEED before you begin the meditation process:

- A chakra
- A dreamcatcher
- Incense, specifically of Jasmine and Red Willow Bark flavor
- A Mikado color yoga mat
- Two sets of Dorje and Bell
- Brass Bumpa Vase with Spout

All recommendations must be obeyed in order to receive true peace leading to enlightenment



Artwork by Lauren Skarbek

You are Drowning
by Manndy Ramirez

You are drowning
Lost in a vast sea
A sea of sadness
At first you struggle
You scream for help
You see a ship sailing by
So you chase it
Hoping for refuge
But it sails past
It gives you no thought
It gives you no refuge
So you quit
Eventually you make it back to shore
But you are tired
You are lying on the banks
Letting the waves roll over you
From this sea of sadness
This sea of tears
You can see a rock
You're too tired to reach it
So you stay
Lying in your sea of sadness
Your sea of tears
And as you cry
This sea of sadness
This sea of tears grows
And you watch it
Flooding your world
But one day you realize
That you must stop crying
You must stop the flood
Finally, you reach up to that rock
You pull yourself from the waves
From this sea of sadness
This sea of tears
You let the sun dry your face
You watch your sea of sadness recede
Although some days you take a swim
In your sea of sadness
Your sea of tears
You know you will survive
You are a strong swimmer

Not Everything is as it Seems
by Gabby Ruffin

Not everything is as it seems
Some good, some bad, some both
What looks like a sheep may be a wolf
What sounds like wind may be ghosts
Not everything is as it seems
It depends on how deep you see
You may see my shackles are gone
But I don't feel very free



Artwork by Gabby Ruffin



Artwork by Brooks Skarbek

Self-Acceptance
by Beatrice Gar

Yesterday I told myself
I wasn't good enough
I had voices creeping
Sleeping inside my head

My cries were silenced
By a monstrous heathen
Telling me to conceal
But oh, I did not obey

I went out searching
Searching for what
Would set me free
But alas it was me

I had been hiding
Shying from my truest form
I now see what I am
And accept what I will be

Trapped
by Teddy Gadsden

Sadness fills the air
Increasing madness will lead to despair
I've reached my breaking point
How do I release it?
Constant pain thumping in my head
Such pain, it makes me wish that I were dead
These feelings, trapped in my skin
Oh how hard it's been
I can't shake it
I'm in pain
They see it in my eyes
They don't realize how hard it is for me to be alive
Oh this life, it just doesn't seem right

I can't sleep through the night
The terror behind closed eyes
Soaring through the dark skies of night
I'm shot and I fall to my demise
These feelings of being trapped inside
I can't escape my own mind
I'm losing control, I'm stuck in this hole of what I want to call my life
I'm trapped; trapped in this life
I'm all alone with no one to call my own
This lonely life is the saddest of them all
I'm called names, like "fat" or "gay"
It makes me want to hide
I'm burning up inside
Thoughts good and bad start to collide

Echo and Narcissus
by Manndy Ramirez

She loved him but he not her
He says he only has an eye for beauty
For he was in love with the reflection staring back at him
He got what he deserved or perhaps what she wished upon him
His beauty was a blessing of a curse
Causing him to fall for himself
Begging for a kiss from the lips which were his
Swallowing nothing
Refusing to eat
Until his “miss” returned his wish
But the longer he waited the more he faded
Day after day
Night after night
He started to lose his breath of life
Withering away like a flower
What a lovely idea
When he died his beauty lived on
But only in a flower
Oh what a genius thing
How smart are the gods
Much smarter than you and me

The World is Blind
by Mikeala Rainey

The world is blind.
The world sees what it wants to see.
The world sees a gay boy.
The world does not see a boy who has a passion for football and just happens to have a boyfriend.
The world sees a black woman from the hood.
The world doesn’t see a strong, hard-working woman who happens to live in Compton.
The world sees a fat boy.
The world doesn’t see a boy who loves singing but feels rejected because the world wants their singer to be slimmer.
The world sees a woman.
The world doesn’t see someone who is here prove herself equal to a man by working twice as hard as one.
The world doesn’t see that it’s filled with wonderful people of all types, races, and backgrounds.
The world is consumed by the image of so-called perfection that when the little “flaws” arise, it becomes completely blinded and blocks the person out of its vision.

Photograph by Sam Sawyer

Peace with Nature is...

contribution to the betterment of Earth

Leaving no trace

Beautiful

quiet

Tranquilty

Breathing in and seeing BEAUTY

Relaxing

the key to being at peace with yourself ♡

lovely

contributing to Nature not destroying it.

Contributing to the Earth, not taking away from it.

tranquility and softness

quietness

Rhythm of the Ocean

by Anna Walkup

The rhythm in a uniform beat
Chaos and calm replete
The consistent characteristics of a wave
Is how one can expect all others to behave
Consistently pounding against the sand
Millions upon millions of uniform specks
Complete an environment so grand
Yet so unexpectedly complex
Diversity thrives in even the simplest things
There are hundreds of fish in the sea
That contrast against the uniformity
Beneath the sand
Holds creatures unknown
Even in the sand
Diversity has grown
The simplest of things
At first glance
Can become complex
If given the chance

My Kind of Paradise

by Grace Hinnant

It's where the sun kisses your skin
Where you can taste and smell the salty water
Where the waves carry ocean treasures to the shore
The sand that changes into kingdoms and thrones
It's where the skyline collides with the water far out in the distance
It's the way the wind brushes your hair back
It's the way that the water sways you like a song
It's how the seagulls soar in the sky above the sea
How the smashing waves erase the footprints others have left in the sand
The sandy towels and shady umbrellas
The washed-up broken shells and keen shark teeth
How the salty shores glisten in the sun
The midnight crawlers racing to the sea
I love how the ocean breeze sweeps away your problems and worries
I love the way the salty water creeps up to your feet
My kind of paradise is the kind where the sky is bright and the water is cool
My kind of paradise is vacation

Artwork by Julia Rayfield

On the Porch at Pawley's

by Macie Leath

The porch at Pawley's; a memory and a peaceful scene
Sprayed with a scent of salt and sea
Dusted with beach sand and plucked sea shells
Echoes of the waves and the ringing of chime bells

On the porch at Pawley's, families join friends
A tradition passed down from generation to generation
Sunburnt faces smiling brighter than the sun
Listening to tales of the past coming undone

The porch at Pawley's; an emblem of Southern grace
A memory that can never be replaced

Nothing is

by Xieamadia Hawkins

Everything is continually being in place
The world is still turning like it should
People are still being civilized as they should
Animals are still being animals as they should
Nature is still being nature
Nothing is moved
Nothing is changed

Everything is still the same and
Nature will let it be as it should
Everything has its place
Nothing will be moved
But as the Earth rotates around the sun
Things are still changing
The universe is expanding
Like Nature's beauty expands throughout the world

No one is able to understand nature,
No one is able to understand the world,
No one is able to understand the universe
But nothing was meant to be understood
Which is peaceful
Everything was meant to be in peace
Everything was meant to be still

Artwork by Macie Leath

As the Rain Comes Falling Down

by Grace Stricklin

As the rain comes falling down
It seeps through the cracked dry ground
Carving a path through the desolate land
Until it stops on a grain of sand
An ant approaches the single drop
And wonders how it came to stop
He looks to the heavens, but all he can see
Are the multitude of drops much large than he
He cannot fathom from whose hand the rain was sown
Understanding he is not completely alone.

I look upon the crashing, rolling blue wave
Wanting to bottle it so its energy will stay
However, in my house I see it anew
And realize its majesty has gone away

The sun shines upon the vast blue sea
As the dry ground quenches its thirst
New life from it does burst
The droplets brought life to the land
From snow-capped mountains, to desert sands
This life is not an earthly gift
But it is a power filled heavenly kiss

Artwork by Olivia Harvey

The Old Oak Tree

by Zuzanna Chruszcz

Near the shore an oak tree stood
With its roots anchored in the ground
All that it gave was good
To the simple world it was bound

And there upon the lake
Its branches spread under the sky
Shielding the earth from ache
Sheltering birds before they fly

There it is growing green
Leaves reflecting a glinting sheen
Here birds sit as they preen
A fraction of a daily routine

There it stands until today
Removed from the path
well-traveled
In wind it still does sway
By the shore
Years still unravel

Dancing Fae

by Journey Ramirez

Swirling along lazily with the sky, accepting the gentle nudge of the wind, I go on. Looping around and around, the sensations jumble my thoughts. Urging myself forward, I seek the place of dreams. Dreams so intense they hurt; so beautiful they burn. With the desire leading the way, I spot the hills of the fae, their laughs joyous to my ears. Dancing about in circles, they seem to bloom with the flowers. Over the dancing fae, the sky opens as if to welcome the sound, becoming an aurora. The display of light doesn't do justice to the magic they are dancing. To an unheard tune, they boastfully show their prowess with their the breathtakingly beautiful moves. It was
almost a fight, with the way the graceful movements turned into a pattern accompanied by the faces of those long forgotten.

Forgetting my path of desire, I watched, lost in the motion. Eventually the aurora dissipated, yet I couldn't tell until they had finished their dancing. They were even more captivating than lights upon the sky. The fae collapsed into themselves; their breaths lightly audible, as they lifted their faces and graced me with their gaze. The shocking brand of blue seared me to the core. One fae was deep; intense enough to swoop in and swim to the depths, grazing the bottom. Another was light enough to appear transparent. I imagined the reflection from a waterfall was dull in comparison. And the last one was stormy, as if enraged yet not. This one's serious face had caught my attention. Around and around I went in the whirlwind. I sucked in a breath, as if to speak yet felt I couldn't. Then they spoke, asking "You've come for what?" I hesitantly replied to them all "Peace." In unison, they nodded and turned around, gliding into the trees. I was shutter shocked; I had wanted peace, yet here I was seeking dreams. Seduced by desire no more, I followed my trail of peace and set about my travels.

Artwork by Emmie Gause

In the Valley
by Ella DuBard

A girl climbs a tree, tears her dress
But does not cry
For she can see, from way up high
A sea of daisies and the sky
The world from this height
Is a wonder to the eye
No man or woman could imagine
The sight of the little white daisies
And the big blue sky
However, this girl knows
The sight she beholds
Would never be the same
If it were not seen as a whole

In a far off town
A man sees that field of daisies
He must take some for his wife
His journey is long; his mind unhappy
And does not appreciate the glorious valley
The wife was content with her stolen flowers
Until they died, and she knew
This was not their place to prosper

To find the truth, you must see
The world with precious wonder
Gaze at the stars, breath in the air
And never doubt it is rare

Beyond
by Will Nickles

Beyond the walls of block and brick
Beyond the sirens whirring quick
There can be seen land lush and thick
A place which is untamed

Where creatures roam and verdure grows
Where gushing freshets run and flow
Where honking cars do not exist
Where mountains glow like amethyst

Within this place there soon will be
Men who'll harvest stone and tree
They'll reap the land and drain the sea
With iron, steel, and industry

Artwork by Destiny Eaddy

Jacob Augustus Spoon II

by Elise Germany

On a dull April morning in 1996, Nurse Melanie knocked on Mr. Jacob Spoon's door and received no response. In her profession this was not unusual; the elderly often take naps. She knocked again but still no reply. Following protocol she pushed the door open to check on the old man and found him not to be napping; Jacob Spoon had fallen into the eternal sleep with his beady eyes open and filmy. As a nurse in a nursing home, this would not be unusual either, however, this particular situation was especially odd and caused a jolt to Melanie's soul that sent her panting and screaming back to the lobby.

Jacob Augustus Spoon II had been one for fearsome adventures. In his elderly state, he never failed to tell each person he met about his westward journeys, and when no one could spare the energy to listen, he spoke his tales to the drafts of air emanating from the Home's ventilation system. But Jacob was not a typical old man. He wasn't nostalgic. He didn't tell his stories to reminisce about his youth. His speech was incessant, and his voice was brushed with panic. Jacob was sent to the Home months after the passing of his wife, Edna, weeks after he began talking frantically about his Wyoming days.

Late into the second month of 1996, Jacob stood whistling on his porch with a needle of wheat rolling between his tobacco teeth. His mind was projecting fresh memories of Edna's funeral, but he was miles away from sorrow – he considered her the most insufferable affair of his existence. He was continuing his lament of the years wasted as he caught a glimpse of a crotalus viridis slithering through the grass toward the steps. With a startlingly spry reflex, Jacob grasped his pocket knife and advanced on the rattlesnake. Without the slightest of hesitations, he set himself orders to murder the reptile and skin it for a trophy. The serpent allowed Jacob's knife within inches of itself before it disappeared. Jacob pierced the ground and was instantly plunged into a chill, the flat land rising into mountains and crumbling back down, enveloping the Earth in a tumultuous grey dust. Thousands of snakes were birthed from the erosion and wriggled forward, each squeezing a broken bird through its starved, unhinged jaw. A pearly hand appeared behind the serpents, slowly rising above them until a whole, incomplete figure was glimmering in front of Jacob Spoon. The figure was nearly human – a translucent woman with arms and legs and face, but her skin had been grated off in irregular sheets, and her hands were mashed into non-existence. She was close to him, but he could not possibly reach out to her – he was petrified by her familiarity.

In the year 1957, Jacob became acquainted with a gorgeous woman by the name of Rita Lark. The two first laid eyes on each other in a central Kansas bar. He was reclined with his feet on a table when she stepped in from the sunlight and gazed at him from behind a shock of windswept hair. They were instantly drawn to each other, though she more out of love and he out of depraved loneliness. They sat together until the light changed from yellow to pink to blue, then left the bar and lay together until the light changed from blue to pink to yellow. In their second yellow hours, Rita Lark, a mere eighteen, decided she could never love a man as much as she loved Jacob. She declared her intention to accompany Jacob on his travels to Wyoming. Jacob, always full of selfish desire, encouraged her. The two joined with a cattle ranching gang and began their northwest trek. Jacob soon became tired of his tagalong – he found her to be a nuisance. He often left her sleeping as he packed their camps in hopes that she would wake when he was too far to be found.

When they finally reached the mountains of Wyoming, the land was shrouded in rain. The crew quickly set up camp in a quiet valley and ventured out again to bring the animals to the feeding ground. Jacob joined them and left Rita in their tent. Not far from the valley, the terrain worsened and prevented any being from proceeding. The men decided to turn back to camp and wait for the rains to pass. In the camp, Jacob attempted to light a fire, but the wood was too saturated with water to be burnt. A rumbling came in from over the south summit that quickly became an obvious threat. Jacob, Rita, and the men saw great boulders and grotesque deracinated trees barreling down the mountainside. Shoving Rita to the ground, Jacob jumped onto their horse and cantered away from danger. When he and the ranchers reached higher ground, they could see their camp being consumed by Earth. Jacob could see Rita's figure clambering up the base of the western mountain, blind to the creeping mud and bouncing rock directly above her. She tried to fly away, but Jacob watched as the dark wave washed over her and carried her off.

Case No. 7746330 Date: 12 April 1996
Reporting Officer: Jones Reported by: Melanie S. Murdoch
Details of Event: Body of Jacob Augustus Spoon II found dead in room 120 at the Jacksonville County Nursing Home. Possible homicide. Cause of death is unclear. No fingerprints found. No signs around the room of disturbance or struggle. Body found missing patches of skin. Hands not attached to body nor observed at any location within the crime scene. Remaining skin on body can be described as scaly.

Nature's Epiphany

by Florence Wang

Humans will forever be unlimited beings
In constant motion with universal seeings
As the world itself lacks in intent
We must learn to avoid intentional dissent

Nature should be seen through a positive view
Its ever going cycle provides a certain value
The petals on a flower connect in askew
As it depicts a lack of nature
Is there anything to do?

The Raven flies above the horizon
Searching as it lands on a piece of greisen
It seems lost as it rifles for answers
Overlooking society's premature banters

Leaves swing softly against the wind
Hoping to experience
What was once there
The perception of nature's bend
Costs us the value of
An individual's share



Artwork by Mary Huth

Societal Peace Is...

A world with Love!

Temporary

a connection with the world

Acceptance

Non violence

"Peace is coming together as one with no disturbance"

being together undisturbed

A world without depression

A world without Hatred.

A Society without evil spirits.

Temporary

"A world without hate crimes..."

A world without depression

getting along with others and being kind to everyone around you

is a world that's silent

a world without any trouble

enjoying and getting along with People

"A world without hate crimes..."

a world without any troubl

"Peace is coming together as one with no disturbance"

Peace is everyone respecting each other.

A world without depression

being together undisturbed

a connection with the world

A world without Hatred.

A world without depression

A Society without evil spirits.

Non violence

is a world that's silent

"A world without hate crimes..."

a world without any trouble

loving everyone

A world with Love!

Light on the Horizon
by Anna Walkup

Light on the horizon
Almost in my reach
Grazing my fingertips
Peace in my soul, I preach

Swallowed by constant fears
Pulled down into explosions
Enveloped in the darkest tears
All I see is violence and commotion



Artwork by Anna Walkup

The Savior is Now Here
by Mya' Johnson-Jones

The sky is falling
Causing only darkness
No light on the land
Only darkness in sight

Searching for the light
They walked all that night
Screaming out in vain
Crying in the rain

The roads crumble down
Fire all around
Burning death
Battle of the dead

Bursts of light
Golden Gates appear
Flush of cool air near
The savior is now here

Peace is
by Lucy den Ouden

An escape from disturbance
The tranquil state of mind
A belief of equal wellbeing
Something to sign
Free will
Cultural cohesion
Tolerance
A reason
Harmony in society
An opportunity for change
A goal
An exchange

Before the Peace
by Kailyn Goodwin

Can you look into their hearts?
What do you see?
Is it guns, violence, or maybe a plea?
Do their hearts implode like the bombs they throw?
Do they get to fly away just like a crow?
When the deed is done, do they sink below?
And at the end, when it's all over,
What do you see?
Is it guns, violence, or maybe a plea?

Oh My Foe, Oh My Friend!

by Ella DuBard

You are so crass, you are so thin
Why must it be like this?
My sad mood will not diminish

They promulgate me a judge
And I wish my mind would budge
But their words are so cruel
I believe my will won't foil

However, I must try to
Tamper down my foolish pride
So I can see their world
As I do my friends and mine

A new mind, a new day!
My thoughts have changed their ways
No more foes, only friends
My acceptance made me win

Grandma

by Naia Tappa

I have come to accept her ways
Though she makes me crazy
She pokes and prods me all the time
But, I am used to it by now

Even though she lives far away
It feels like she is close to home
But when she visits me, Mom groans
And vibes in the house dampen

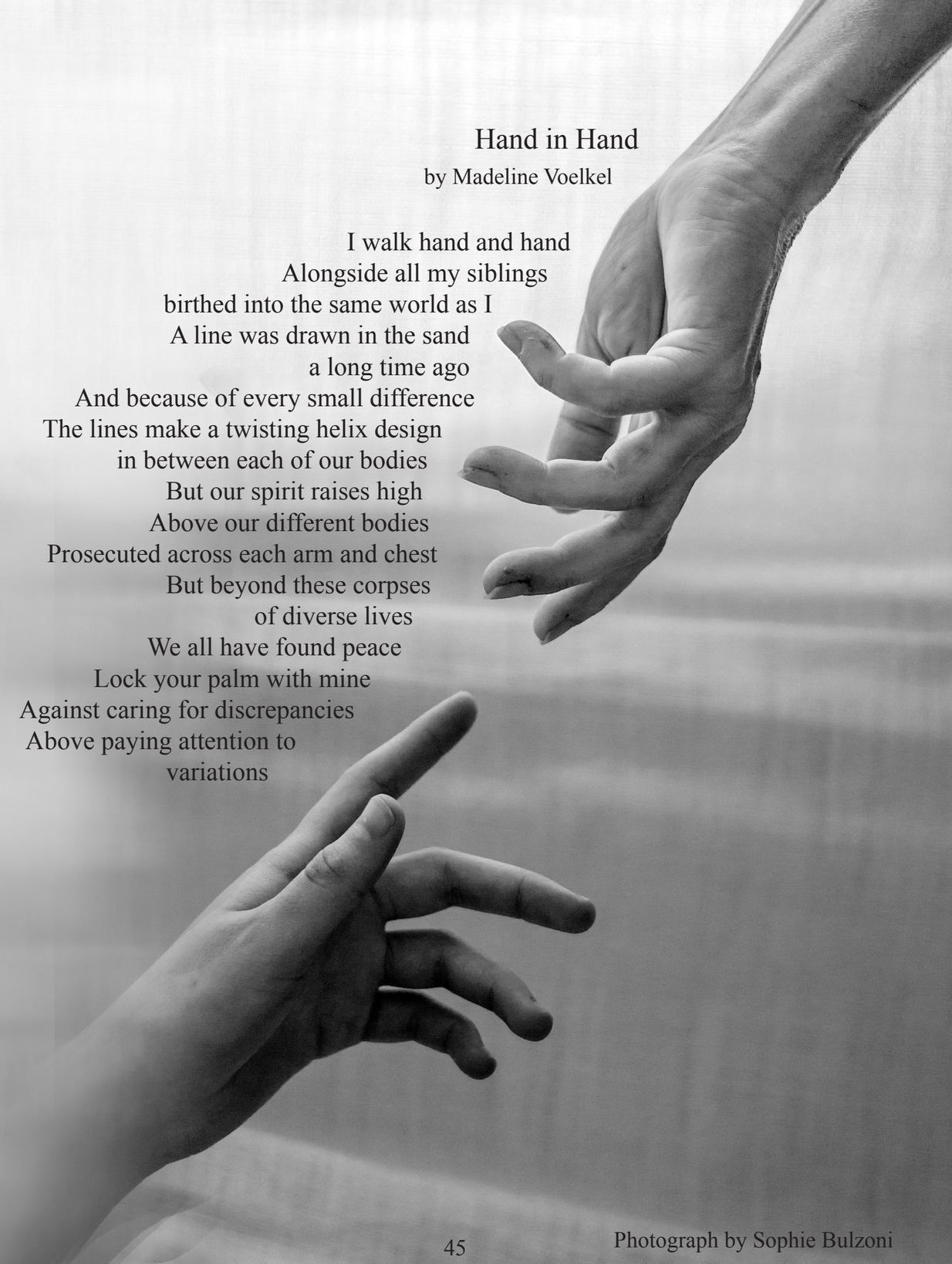
Her husband has to deal with her
He's very accepting
I so wish I could be like him
I should really take notes

She latches on and doesn't let go
Even when you ask her to
We deal because she's family
And I really do love my grandma

Hand in Hand

by Madeline Voelkel

I walk hand and hand
Alongside all my siblings
birthed into the same world as I
A line was drawn in the sand
a long time ago
And because of every small difference
The lines make a twisting helix design
in between each of our bodies
But our spirit raises high
Above our different bodies
Prosecuted across each arm and chest
But beyond these corpses
of diverse lives
We all have found peace
Lock your palm with mine
Against caring for discrepancies
Above paying attention to
variations



Photograph by Sophie Bulzoni

Diversity

by Julia Rayfield

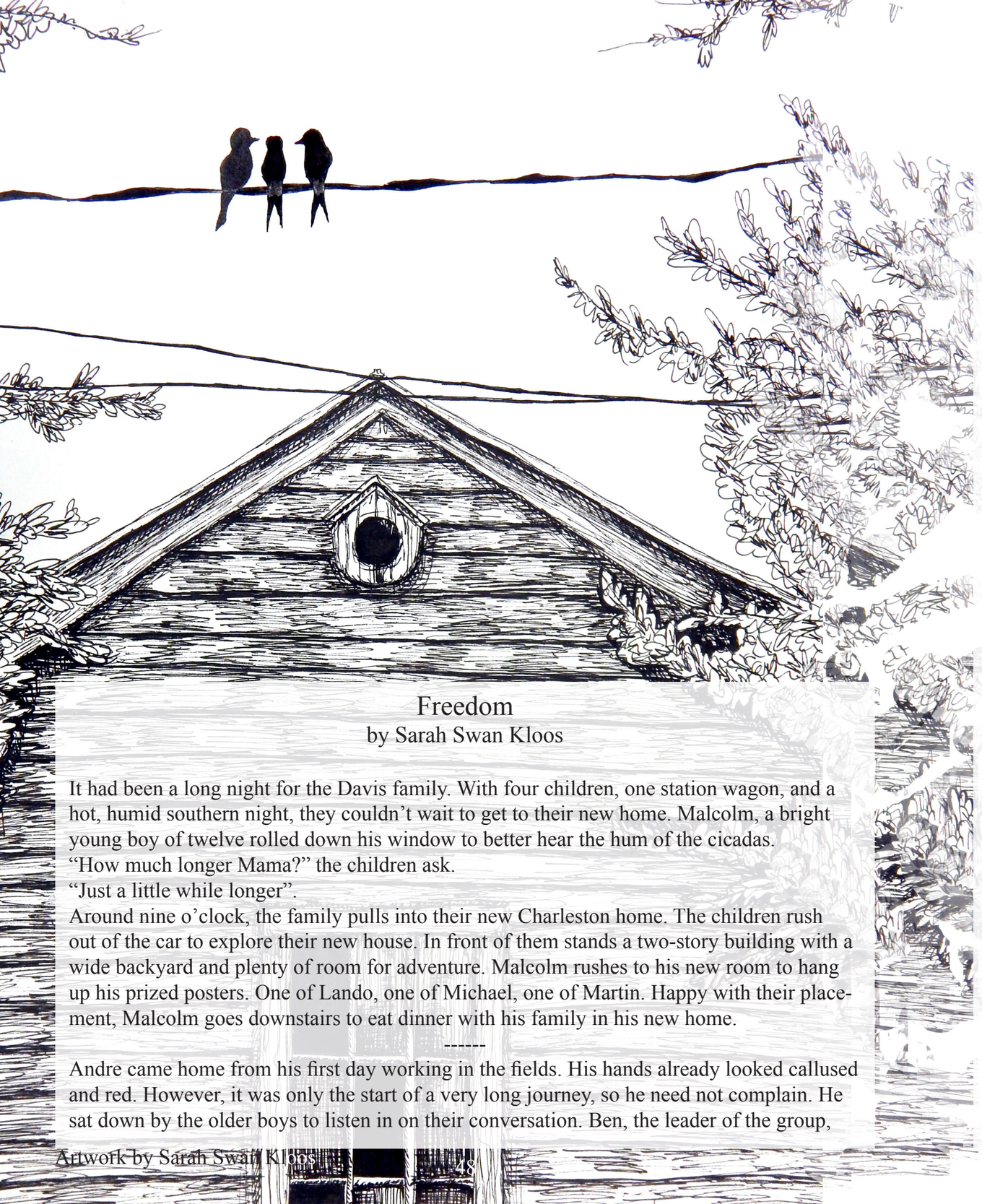
People are surrounded by diversity
But also entrenched in adversity
Many are afraid to differ from their peers
Causing them to slowly drown in tears

This world has forced people to blend in with society
Erasing any chance at variety
Fitting in has become the new norm
Everyone now wishes to conform

Rather than offering constant slander
Or pretending to be an innocent bystander
People should recognize the potential of cultural discrepancy
And realize the benefits of the new found complexity

Once you find a way to change your point of view
The outcasts will find a way to pull through
Loving everyone like they are our own sisters and brothers
We can learn to begin accepting others

Artwork by Lucy den Ouden



Freedom

by Sarah Swan Kloos

It had been a long night for the Davis family. With four children, one station wagon, and a hot, humid southern night, they couldn't wait to get to their new home. Malcolm, a bright young boy of twelve rolled down his window to better hear the hum of the cicadas.

"How much longer Mama?" the children ask.

"Just a little while longer".

Around nine o'clock, the family pulls into their new Charleston home. The children rush out of the car to explore their new house. In front of them stands a two-story building with a wide backyard and plenty of room for adventure. Malcolm rushes to his new room to hang up his prized posters. One of Lando, one of Michael, one of Martin. Happy with their placement, Malcolm goes downstairs to eat dinner with his family in his new home.

Andre came home from his first day working in the fields. His hands already looked callused and red. However, it was only the start of a very long journey, so he need not complain. He sat down by the older boys to listen in on their conversation. Ben, the leader of the group, talked in a hushed whisper.

"If we leave Charleston after sundown tonight, we're guaranteed to make it to Charlotte. There, we can meet David, who will lead us to Virginia and eventually Pennsylvania. After that, we're free men. But we can't speak a word of this plan to anyone—if Master Davis finds out, Lord knows what could happen."

This wasn't the first time Andre heard talk of freedom. It was something that seemed so foreign, but something that felt right.

"Maybe I can join you?"

The men turn around to see Andre listening in on their conversation. Ben walks over and takes the young boy's hands.

"Don't worry. We ain't gonna leave nobody here".

That night, Andre dreamt of living in Pennsylvania. He imagined he could work with Ben and the other boys, or even go to school and learn to read. Although he didn't know much, he knew that the new state would bring him a better fortune than his current residence.

Even though Malcolm was in a new place, his nightly routine was the same. Take a bath, brush his teeth, read ten pages of his current book, and turn on his ET nightlight before dozing off. However, instead of falling asleep tonight, Malcolm thought about his old home. He missed the cool Pennsylvania summers and his basketball team. He missed going to Phillies games with Jared and Rob. Most importantly, he missed his old school and old friends. Mama and Dad promised visits back home twice a year, but Malcolm knew it wouldn't be the same. However, he was excited to start a new school and meet new friends. Who knows, this could even be the year he gets his first girlfriend. Comfortable with thought of his new home and city, Malcolm closes his eyes and drifts off to sleep.

Andre is suddenly awoken by a loud whisper.

"Wake up! Wake up! It's time to leave!"

Andre grabs his bag and follows Ben into the Carolina night. As he and the other men walk in the secluded, dark forest, Andre hears the cicadas humming. He wonders if there are cicadas in Pennsylvania.

Malcolm wakes at midnight, thirsty for a glass of water. He walks downstairs to his new kitchen and pours himself a drink. After taking his first sip, he looks up and sees people walking across his yard. Most of them looked older, but there was one boy about his own age. He walks closer to the window to get a better look. The men seemed to be carrying their possessions and traveled in a hushed manner. It looked as if they were running away.

The young boy looks straight at Malcolm and stops walking. Both boys look at each other, not knowing what to do. Malcolm notices many similarities between the two; their small stature, round eyes, and perhaps their sense of curiosity. He decides to wave at the boy in hopes that he'll wave back. To his surprise, the boy does. Malcolm turns around to put his glass down on the counter. Right before going back upstairs, he glances once more at the window. He sees the boy heading into the dark night to catch up with the rest of his group. Not knowing if what he just saw was a dream or an illusion, Malcolm drifts back to sleep, dreaming about the young boy and his journey.

Artwork by Sarah Swan Kloos

Photograph by Laurie McKee

The Struggle is Real

by Teddy Gadsden

There is a struggle
Powerful people want it all
Poor people steal and get dropped like a ball
The struggle will never cease
Until this whole world falls
If this was my world, there would be peace
Big dreams would come true for those who seek
Life would be great
Everyone would be sweet
Deaths occur almost every other day
I just wish there was a better way
The families of the people all scream and shout
Wondering why the cops took their loved ones out
Oh but it's not just that
There's burglaries gone wrong
Random shootings all day long
Kids submit to suicide because of bullies
But, worst of all, are the murders
Without differences being set aside
No "I'm sorry's", no "It's fine's"
And altogether, it always ends in saying "Goodbyes"
But, in my world, no one dies
Their lives are peaceful
No one cries
All lives are lived happily and to the fullest
No one dies early because of foolishness
In my world, everyone cares for one another
Everyone gets the deal
But, in this world
The Struggle is Real

My View of the World
by Faith Green

My view of the world
Is similar to a swirl
People work and work
Myths of storks
Are known by all
As we hide, from the cold of fall
The connections of our minds
Give others a surprise
But that's life
Peace on earth
Masked by the one's hurt
A new breed
Of children to feed
Our population grows
But that's the point of it all
All our importance is valued
As we give our gratitude
To the ones believing in us
Giving all our trust
In people

Acceptance
by Dallas Bass

Acceptance is the key
For living in harmony
In order to live in community
There must be love, respect, and unity
One should act like a newborn
In that, they are not implicated with scorn
Constant distress leads to forlorn
We must prevent a place where one can be torn
Discrimination here is far too great
How could we allow so much hate?
We use tools like social media as our bait
These things must end!
Acceptance can be our fate
The young boy, just like a tree
Opens his long branches wide to thee
It doesn't matter who thee will be
Why can't we all be like he?

Artwork by Charles Parker

Another Planet Lost

by Eva Voros

Behind a curtain, a world away
Pale, cosmic, blackened dust merges
A baby is born
Her eyes open, already wet with tears
Starlight showers her face
She observes the weeping world
Burnt patches of red consume the Earth
The distant atmosphere, humid with indifference
Her heart shatters the dark with a hallow cry
The universe pulses in response
Another planet lost
Void of peace

Through the Window Pane

by Mazie Goodlett

Through the window pane
I see black mushrooms
Changing reflection
Peaceful state of mind

Peace

by Alexis Cole

People in the streets
Peacefully taking a stand
To end the distress

Artwork by Mazie Goodlett

